IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA CHARLESTON DIVISION

IN RE: AQUEOUS FILM-FORMING) MDL NO: 2:18-MN-2873

FOAMS PRODUCTS LIABILITY

LITIGATION) July 26, 2019

TRANSCRIPT OF STATUS CONFERENCE

BEFORE THE HONORABLE RICHARD M. GERGEL UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE, presiding

APPEARANCES:

For the Plaintiffs: FRED THOMPSON, III, ESQ.

MICHAEL LONDON, ESQ. SCOTT SUMMY, ESQ. PAUL NAPOLI, ESQ. MATTHEW EDLING, ESQ. KEVIN HANNON, ESQ. ALAN KNARF, ESQ. MIHIR DESAI, ESQ. GALE PEARSON, ESQ. JOSH COHAN, ESQ.

ALEXANDER KIPPERMAN, ESQ. FREDERICK KENDALL, III, ESQ.

TREY FRAZER, ESQ. TOPE LEYIMU, ESQ.

JOSEPH L. FELICIANI, ESQ. CARLA BURKE PICKREL, ESQ. CHRISTINA COSSICH, ESQ.

PHIL COSSICH, ESQ.
LOUISE R. CARO, ESQ.
CHARLES SCHAFFER, ESQ.
JUSTIN ARENAS, ESQ.
CHRISTIAN MARCUM, ESQ.
NANCY CHRISTENSEN, ESQ.
DAVID McDIVITT, ESQ.
DAVID HOYLE, ESQ.
REBECCA NEWMAN, ESQ.

GARY DOUGLAS, ESQ.
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KEVIN McKIE, ESQ. GARY ANDERSON, ESQ. DICK ORTEGA, ESQ.

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For the Plaintiffs: JAMES FERRARO, ESQ.

JANPAUL PORTAL, ESQ. ROE FRAZER, ESQ.

ESTHER BEREZOFSKY, ESQ.

BEN KAPLAN, ESQ. JOHN GILMOUR, ESQ. BILL JACKSON, ESQ.

For the Defendants: DAVID DUKES, ESQ.

BRIAN DUFFY, ESQ.

JOSEPH PETROSINELLI, ESQ.

MICHAEL OLSEN, ESQ. CHRISTINA FALK, ESQ. SARAH WILLIAMS, ESQ.

DAN RING, ESQ.

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MARA MURPHY, ESQ. RITA KESTERSON, ESQ. NICHOLAS MINO, ESQ. JOHN CERRETA, ESQ.

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LIAM MONTGOMERY, ESQ. AMANDA KITTS, ESQ. CHIN-ZEN PLOTNER, ESQ.

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1 Friday, July 26, 2019 2 (WHEREUPON, court was called to order at 9:03 a.m.) 3 THE COURT: Good morning. Please be seated. If 4 it appears that my papers are getting larger when I walk 5 in, it is correct. Y'all are keeping me occupied very 6 effectively. 7 Well, I have reports from all over town that 8 y'all are eating well. I get it everywhere people go, they say they've seen, quote, my lawyers. And let me say, 9 10 the restaurateurs are thrilled. 11 Okay. We're in the matter of the -- our monthly 12 status conference for July of the AFFF MDL. Counsel who 13 will be speaking today, could they identify themselves for 14 the record, please? 15 MR. THOMPSON: Your Honor, my name's Fred 16 Thompson, and I'm plaintiff's liaison. 17 MR. LONDON: Good morning, Your Honor, Michael 18 London. 19 MR. SUMMY: Good morning, Your Honor, Scott 20 Summy. 21 MR. NAPOLI: Good morning, Your Honor, Paul 22 Napoli. 23 MR. PETROSINELLI: Good morning, Your Honor, Joe 24 Petrosinelli. I see where I'm grossly outnumbered this 25 morning.

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1	THE COURT: You are. You are.
2	MR. PETROSINELLI: I'll give it my best shot.
3	THE COURT: Just throw Dukes out in front of
4	you.
5	MR. DUKES: Good morning, Your Honor, David
6	Dukes.
7	THE COURT: Yes.
8	MR. OLSEN: Good morning, Your Honor, Mike
9	01sen.
10	THE COURT: Yes.
11	MR. DUFFY: Good morning, Brian Duffy.
12	THE COURT: Okay.
13	MR. RING: Good morning, Your Honor, Dan Ring.
14	THE COURT: Thank you.
15	MS. FALK: Good morning, Your Honor, Christina
16	Falk.
17	THE COURT: Good morning. And Ms. Williams is
18	thrilled to be out of here, I suspect. So I've never seen
19	someone so happy in my life. It's good to have you.
20	Okay. Folks, let me I've got a list of
21	issues that I want to raise or which I understand you want
22	to raise. I might confess, then, some of them I might not
23	fully appreciate each party's position and why they're
24	asserting it so you'll need to help me a little bit.
25	Let me just as a as a opening sort of

understanding of my approach to issues of discovery and MDL, it is very different than an individual case discovery. It's just very different. We right now have 110 cases. If I'm reading the tea leaves right, there are a lot more coming. And they are among the most complex environmental cases, any one of them, pending in the country. It was a very wise decision of the MDL panel to consolidate them. It's a tremendous amount of efficiency for all parties.

But, you know, the changes in the federal rules a couple years ago regarding discovery had a major focus on proportionality. What is at issue? And what is the cost? And it's very much of a cost-benefit analysis. And we had -- because we had cases with relatively little at stake in which defendants were basically being bullied into resolution by the costs of discovery, it was something we heard a lot about. It was a reasonable resolution. And I've seen a lot of progress since then.

And in MDL, that calculation really tips towards broad discovery, I'm just going to tell you that. I -- you'll hear me from time to time talk about my Lipitor experience, because it's the only other one I had, and a complex, very large MDL. I learned a lot. I think counsel involved there learned a lot. I insisted on robust discovery. The defense counsel were, I think,

biting through nails they were so mad at me. They later thanked me for that, okay? Because when they went up on appeal, the appeal was not about being denied access.

So -- and the issues here invite broad discovery. Look at the claims. I don't have any idea if they have any merit to them. But if they are the proof, or their claim, they're going to need access to information that dates over a half century, right? And the defense of governmental contract immunity raises some of the same factual issues.

So these issues are going to require a great deal of discovery. Much of it -- you know, we have, of course, debates over keywords and all this stuff for word searches. Well, what if, you know, we're pre -- when we're talking about -- pre-emails, right? We're talking about getting corporate documents that go back prior to that time. I -- hopefully, some of the defendants have digitalized those and will help search them. But this is going to be -- this is going -- this is going to be a heavy burden on defendants. I'm just going to say that to you right now. And it's a -- it's a necessity. But imagine the alternative of being in 110 different places doing this and having 110 different judges insisting on you and maybe 30 different lawyers litigating each of their own ideas about what discovery is necessary.

So I want you to understand that ideas about, you know, we ought to put, you know, right now these strict limits on interrogatories and requests to produce, I'm not -- I'm not interested in that. The normal 25 rule makes no sense in this case. And I've made that clear.

On the other hand, this is not let's imagine the craziest question we can ask defendants. And let's see how long we can tie them up looking for it. That's not going to go either. So I urge the plaintiffs, don't, don't abuse my goodwill here. Be serious.

And where requests are made that would require a great deal of effort to retrieve that information, if the defendants are aware of a shortcut how you could get essentially the same information, you're supposed to confer, obviously, before you file a protective order motion, offer that to the plaintiff's lawyers. Say, listen, this would be enormously demanding, but how about this as a way to get to the same information?

I know there were requests that I approve discovery before it begins. Huh-uh. That went out with demurrers and co-pleading. Okay? We're not doing that. The system which the federal rules adopted is that -- the modern rules are that if the defendants need protection, they file a motion. Don't file them saying there are too many. That is not a -- that is not an objection that's

worthwhile.

But if there are questions that don't meet the standard under what is it, 15(d) or whatever, you need to come in, and whatever the rule is, tell me that. Okay?

Let's talk about it. We're going to be seeing each other every month. If something's more urgent than that, fine.

Don't answer a discovery unduly burdensome. Okay? That is not an acceptable answer by itself without a serious factual foundation for it.

It'll be a really -- if it's relevant to this claim or your -- one of your defenses, and almost every factual inquiry I suspect will be, don't -- unduly burdensome will not carry a lot of weight. You're getting an incredible efficiency by an MDL. And if it's potentially relevant info -- if this case goes up, I don't want either side to have the issue that they were denied adequate discovery. I want everybody to feel like they got all the information they needed.

Now, the timing of discovery may vary because I think there's some strategic ways we need to deal with issues. And I'm going to urge you, to help you, manage you towards focusing on certain issues. I've told you about that before.

I think the government contractor immunity issue just has got to be up front. It overlaps with other

issues. So I'm not trying to limit you when you're talking to some people. You know, there might be plaintiff claims as well as these defenses, but a lot of them are really similar to each other. What you know, and when you knew it, and who did you warn, and all those issues really are the heart of this case and the heart of the government contractor defense. So there are other issues as well. But I'm just saying, we need to get on with this.

I was looking over how much we had actually accomplished. I think the first conference we -- status conference, I think in March maybe? Does that sound right, you guys? And we're now July. We've set up the PEC and the defense committee. We -- the Government has begun, I understand.

Thank you, Ms. Williams, for giving robust document production allowing access to the very valuable information of the Department of Defense.

The parties have -- are very close on the fact sheets. We'll talk about that in a little while. Y'all have made really great progress. But it is just -- that's easy compared to what we're getting ready to get into right now.

And, you know, I guess the best meetings are going to be where everybody leaves mad at me. Okay? I've

done everybody -- nobody is going to walk out feeling like somehow they won in front of the judge because everybody's agenda, they have agendas different from mine. Mine is I want a level playing field and robust discovery so that everybody is able to gather the evidence relevant and have a fair determination of the issues. That's my job here. I'm pre -- I'm the pretrial guy, right? We may be bellwethers here, or whatever. Or I may try cases if they're brought in South Carolina. But basically, what I'm doing is pretrial.

Okay. With that introduction, let me go through some questions, and I may not end up understanding them correctly. But the first one sort of relates to what I talked about is when must the defendants respond to the defense fact sheet?

By the way, I think these defense fact sheets and the plaintiff fact sheets are really important for a lot of reasons I've explained earlier. And I want to get on -- we're going to end today and I'm going to tell you what I'm thinking about the areas y'all disagree. I'm going to give y'all ten days to work it out and then I'm just going to rule. Okay? Whatever the disagree -- because I don't think the differences are that big a deal myself. And I think they're really important.

I know there's that Question 14 that the

defendants were kind of beefing about with what did you ship, and when did you ship it, and where did it go? That is, like, really critical to know. And it may well be they're all going to defense warehouses, defense department warehouses. And we have got to trace that. We need to get that information out. Well, we're going to do that on a defense fact sheet or a first set of interrogatories or requests to produce, I don't really care. But that is, like, really critical.

On the other hand, the defendants are entitled to make sure that the individual plaintiffs have an -- have a colorable claim. And I don't think that -- I mean, there's not -- very little disagreement. We'll get to what the disagreements are. But the plaintiff fact sheets sort of just give them -- the people say, well, you didn't even live there. Okay? Or you didn't -- you have like no evidence that you have any issues. Well, you know, they're entitled to know that.

Now, I am -- you know, I don't want to do individual causation discovery beyond the plaintiff fact sheets right now. I just think they're a big -- we -- you know, you just -- you know, how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. You just don't take on the whole thing. And I don't -- I think right now there are other things we need to be focusing on.

But I -- we're not going to wait for the plaintiff's fact sheets to be done. We'll work out a time that -- that allows the plaintiff's counsel adequate time to get these forms completed. But they need to get on and the defendants need to get on with -- with completing those fact sheets. And they will help focus other aspects of discovery.

So with that, let me hear from defense counsel on the issue of -- of -- of when we think the defense, the defense fact sheets should be completed.

MR. RING: As reflected in the current draft of the CMO, Your Honor -- and Dan Ring on behalf of DCC and 3M. They're -- and this isn't really an area of dispute, although we can certainly talk about it. They're -- they're keyed off of whether in our view a -- the first PFS to identify a particular site and then we would respond.

THE COURT: Well, let -- let me ask -- let me ask you about this. I don't want a gamesmanship over this. I suspect that that the PEC could give you by Monday morning a list of sites that are at issue in the complaints thus filed. Okay? And we need to get -- I don't want -- Mr. Ring, I don't want a gamesmanship about this. There are 401 sites according to the Department of Defense. We don't have 401 cases so not everyone is

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Some of them may be problems on the -- on
involved.
installations but not on -- not -- in surrounding
communities, there not -- may not be claims. If you need
a list, I'll make the plaintiffs give you the list. But I
want, I want you to go ahead and get those moving. And I
don't want, you know, waiting for the plaintiffs fact --
we're not going to wait for the plaintiff's fact sheets,
I'll tell you that right now.
         MR. RING: And, Your Honor, actually that was
our original proposal, was to try to agree on a list of
sites.
          THE COURT: They don't have to agree. Here's
what it -- here's what we're going to do.
         Who wants to speak for the plaintiffs? Okay.
Mr. London, let me just say this, can you by one week from
today provide a list of all sites which the present cases
claim to be contaminated?
         MR. LONDON: Yes, Your Honor, we could.
could endeavor to identify the current cases that, Your
Honor --
         THE COURT:
                      Sites now at issue.
         MR. LONDON: Sites now at issue.
                                            But. Your
Honor, I -- I think -- I don't know if you want to hear
our position on it. I -- I think we could run into
potential concerns with this approach.
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1 THE COURT: Because? 2 MR. LONDON: Because particularly with 3 individual plaintiffs, there might be multiple sites. 4 THE COURT: Well, have you alleged them in the 5 complaint? 6 MR. LONDON: Well, Your Honor, they may be 7 alleged in the discovery device, which the complaint is 8 going to make your general allegations, but a plaintiff 9 may have moved to two or three --Do your best. You can supplement it 10 THE COURT: 11 later. We don't need to be perfect. I'm trying to get 12 discovery moving. And I want -- I think it's very 13 important to get the sites identified. 14 And listen, if there are more lawsuits, there 15 are going to be more sites, right? I mean, this is not 16 the -- I'm not trying to bind you to this list and no 17 other list. 18 What I'm trying to do is get -- so you can get 19 the information about the sites we know. We know most of 20 I mean, there may be a little bit of softness them. 21 But we want to figure out who put their product 22 there, whose product's at issue. The relative 23 responsibility of defendants is important. And I want to 24 get on with it. 25 And this is going to be refined. You know, the

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whole duty, of course, is to continue to supplement,
right? And -- and that will be not only to supplement on
the defense side but if you've got additional sites, to
supplement your list. And -- but you can, you can go
ahead and get started. It's not -- you're not -- it's not
tasked in bronze.
          MR. LONDON:
                      Right, Your Honor. Well, we -- we
could, as Your Honor indicated, provide -- and I'm not
trying to be disruptive or argumentative on this point,
Judge, so please don't take it that way.
                                         But as framing
these two documents, the defense fact sheet, the
historical nature of it is in response to a plaintiff fact
sheet.
       And so --
         THE COURT: I -- I don't buy it.
         MR. LONDON: Okay. Let me --
         THE COURT: You're wasting your time. I don't
buy --
         MR. LONDON: But, Your Honor, as new cases come
in to be filed, and there will be new sites as
defendants --
          THE COURT: And you will -- and you will give
the defendants notice of that and they will supplement.
We're trying to get the ball rolling. This is not the
final determination, Mr. London.
          MR. LONDON:
                       Okay.
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THE COURT: This is just to get the ball And these number of sites, I mean, some of these sites you have, you know, somebody's probably got -you've probably got a message at your office when you get back today about a site you didn't know about that someone's --Mr. Napoli, do you have something else you want to add to that? MR. NAPOLI: I do. Because when you talk about the site, it's -- it's -- for example, Colorado Springs. If we say our client was exposed in Colorado Springs, all of our -- our knowledge leads us to believe that the Air Force base is the cause of contamination. What occurred in discovery was the defendants said, That's not the site that caused your client's contamination. It was the industrial site next door where those same products were used in an industrial setting. So I think the fear of Mr. London and I is that if we say a specific site like the Air Force base, we're in the blind and we don't know --THE COURT: And then you -- and here's what -you do discovery and you find out there's some other site nearby. And you're going to supplement it. You'll say, Here's notice supplementing my list of August 4, 2019. And you -- and you give them additional ones.

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But -- but the way it works,
         MR. NAPOLI:
unfortunately, Your Honor, and -- and the -- the Air Force
base is -- is public information because the Government
and Department of Defense is putting out their reports of
the remediation of Phase One and Phase Twos of the site.
You don't necessarily get that information in an
industrial setting. The defendants may have it and we may
not know about it. In Colorado --
          THE COURT: And you're going to get discovery
because I'm push -- I'm going to push for the requests to
produce and you'll -- this is going to be a rolling
process, guys. This is not --
          I'm just trying to get the ball rolling. And I
am -- and I'm not going to -- I'm not going to tie one
discovery to the other discovery.
          Give them the list by next Friday. I'll put it
in an order, the working list. I'll make it clear it is
not the final list.
          And then how much time do defendants need to get
the fact sheets done?
          MR. RING: Well, both sides had agreed for the
pending cases for 98 days from the date of your order.
          THE COURT: Sound's biblical. Okay.
                                                98 days?
          MR. RING:
                     Yes.
         THE COURT:
                      Okay.
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1 MR. RING: That was the product of many 2 back-and-forth negotiations. 3 THE COURT: That sounds that way. So -- okay. 4 So we're going to get the lists by next Friday. And 5 98 days later, the defendants will respond. And if there's a problem comes up with getting them completed, 6 7 y'all let me know that. Okay? Does that make sense? 8 MR. RING: Yes, Your Honor. 9 THE COURT: Okay. I'm satisfied. Anything 10 else, Mr. Ring? 11 MR. RING: Not on that issue. 12 THE COURT: Yes, there'll be more, I'm sure. 13 Let's talk about when the plaintiff fact 14 sheets must be completed. Let me just say, we are -- we 15 are not waiting for answers or motions to dismiss to do 16 plaintiff fact sheets, okay? So again, I'm trying to get 17 the process moving. How long do the plaintiff's counsel 18 need to be able to conduct the appropriate interviews and 19 so forth and get the plaintiff fact sheets completed for 20 those presently parties to this action? 21 MR. LONDON: Your Honor, Michael London. For 22 the plaintiffs and defendants presently the -- presently 23 with cases filed, the parties have agreed, and that's not an issue, it's 98 days from --24 25 THE COURT: There we go. Okay. And then was

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typical model.

it -- y'all -- they were talking about 63 days, God only knows where that one came from. Why not the same 98 days? MR. LONDON: Your Honor, the -- the difficulty there and where we are not in agreement is the plaintiff's position is that a fact sheet, despite hearing what Your Honor just said, should be due based upon some triggering event, some answer. THE COURT: Mr. London, you're wasting your I -- I'm -- I think they have a different purpose. We're not triggering off anything. What you do is, it's going to be like one thing is waiting for another thing and we never get anything done. I'm going to set deadlines. I do not view them -- I've looked at them. I don't see any reason right now -- you -- frankly, most of it y'all should have already gotten the information in your intake interviews, okay? And if not, you put a paralegal on the telephone and you can knock them out very quickly. I'm trying to be liberal with you on terms of giving you time to do it. I don't think they're that hard. MR. LONDON: I -- I -- well, Your Honor, I -- I appreciate that. But -- and again, that is not -- not -with all due respect, Judge, I know how you did it in There was no trigger event, but that was not the Lipitor.

The typical model is, Your Honor, an

answer -- a short-form answer, an abbreviated answer.

Some judges have even begun with a notice of appearance, a quasi-answer, something that starts the ball running. The plaintiff --

THE COURT: Mr. London, you're wasting your time. I'm getting the process moving. We've got to move a battleship here. I don't doubt other judges do things different ways. Everybody will have their own way of doing it. I've -- I understand. I read carefully what y'all were saying. We're getting the plaintiff fact sheets completed. Now, how many days do you need for people who are coming in?

MR. LONDON: Well, Your -- for people who are coming in, Your Honor -- and I just -- I will say one other point to this. And I understand that it's a battleship moving. But having the deadline before service of process, which is 90 days under the federal rules, and we're in agreement with a lot of defendants to truncate service through email means, having it before service of process expires could be -- could result in a waste of resources.

So I would submit, Your Honor, if you're not going to require a notice of appearance, some sort of triggering event, that the time should be greater than 90 days. I would submit if Your Honor is going to do it

based upon filing, it should be no less than 120 days from 2 the date of filing. 3 THE COURT: You already said 98 days for 4 existing. Why don't -- I don't understand. Someone's 5 coming in. I looked at the questions. They're not that 6 hard. MR. LONDON: Your Honor, for individual 7 8 plaintiffs, perhaps. But for Government entities, and 9 sometimes there are statute of limitations at play where 10 somebody has to get a complaint on file and they do not 11 have every -- every question --12 THE COURT: But you've got three months to do 13 it, 98 days. Come on. I mean, y'all are making this too 14 hard. Y'all are never going to get this done if y'all are 15 sitting there fighting over this. I'm really, you know --16 MR. LONDON: Your Honor, I'm not trying to fight 17 over it at all. 18 THE COURT: No, you just said something which 19 makes a little more sense which is -- the water districts 20 may be a little -- and the state governmental responses 21 may be a little more involved than the individual, okay? 22 Is 98 days sufficient for all of those, for those already 23 in the case? 24 MR. LONDON: 98 days is -- is -- we've accepted 25 that date for all --

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well.

Okay. I'm going to make it real THE COURT: 98 days for everybody. When they come in, they've got 98 days. That's it. I don't want to argue about it anymore, Mr. London. MR. LONDON: I'm not going to argue with Your Honor either. THE COURT: Okay. You'll be -- one day you'll be glad to get it over with. MR. NAPOLI: If I may? THE COURT: Yes, sir. MR. NAPOLI: It doesn't seem like a good inflection point to me to -- to speak, but I'm going to try to sort of tell an issue. In Colorado, we were under a statute with the defendants. A little gamesmanship was going on between the sides as to whether or not a personal injury case had to be filed or a medical monitoring case had to be filed within two years of when they knew or should have known there was an issue. THE COURT: I've got you. MR. NAPOLI: And so now we had a class action and 8,000 cases filed. The defendants approached us and said we want to do this in a logical fashion. We want to deal with the class which is going to resolve most of the issues. And Judge Jackson wrestled with this issue as

And so what was agreed upon between the parties, of

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Mr. Petrosinelli's predecessor and other people that are here in the courtroom -- but the lawyers changed at one time -- was a stipulation to not serve those complaints. They were never served --THE COURT: But they had -- I suggested in the first meeting that they consider tolling, okay, the individual cases. Because I feared we'll one day get 150,000 individual cases. MR. NAPOLI: That's right. So we signed, the parties --THE COURT: Well, if y'all want to do that, that's another issue. It's not being done now. And if --I'm not the one -- this is the defendant's prerogative. I can't control this. I cannot impose -- and believe me, if I could, I would. Okay? But I can't. So if they don't want that, one day they're going to have to live with 150,000 cases. And they'll probably regret they didn't agree to it. I think they should. But what the point is at this moment, there's no I'm -- I'm not going to let them do discovery staying. beyond the plaintiff fact sheets. They're not going to sit there and start taking the depositions of individual plaintiffs at this point. I'm going to hold that off. We're going to put that down. We're going to do general

liability and general causation first. But I want to give

them the opportunity, and it'll be -- you'll be -- it'll be a favor to you for people who are bogus plaintiffs. I had -- about 20 percent of our Lipitor people had no claim whatsoever. And we got them out and it was a benefit to everybody. I want to use the plaintiff fact sheets for that. And I want the -- I want the defendants to have some assessment of what they're facing.

You know, it does not take a genius to figure out that if certain motions don't go their way, the defendants are in an existential threat to their survival. And that probably promotes some thoughtful resolution of the case. Well, give them the factual foundation to be able to assess their liability.

MR. NAPOLI: So there are thousands of cases.

They're going to get -- they're going to get that

information. We signed the tolling agreement on those --

THE COURT: But you don't have it in this case. You know, I'm getting y'all together once a month. Y'all had -- y'all were -- y'all were within six feet of each other last night. Y'all could have pulled aside and talked about this. Okay? I can't make them do a tolling agreement. I think they should. I'm telling them, you should do that. Okay? I think it'll be in your interests. I don't think you're giving anything up. But if you don't, I can't make them do it.

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MR. NAPOLI: So, Your Honor, the point is, me,
myself, and Mr. Petrosinelli have discussed it. We have a
signed tolling agreement. All the defendants have signed
a tolling agreement, so --
          THE COURT: I have not seen that.
         MR. NAPOLI: Well, if -- if I may approach, I
can give it to your court clerk.
          THE COURT: Mr. Petrosinelli, do you want to
tell me the nature of your tolling agreement?
         MR. PETROSINELLI: No, there's no tolling
agreement. There was an agreement not up on -- related to
service of the complaints --
          THE COURT: Yeah, I mean, this is -- this is --
          MR. NAPOLI: And that was -- as Mr. Napoli said,
it was my predecessor. And back to Your Honor's earlier
comments, that's when it was one case. We have an MDL
now.
     It's a totally different --
         THE COURT: Yeah, I mean, it's a -- let me tell
you something. I think the potential individual claims
could be a nightmare for everyone. We're not going to do
discovery on them now. We're going to get these other
issues out first. And I think it would be prudent for
everybody to agree to a tolling agreement. In the absence
of one, I'm going to give them the plaintiff fact sheets
because I'm going to treat it as if there's no tolling of
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     the claims.
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               But I can control discovery. And I -- and I'm
 3
     going -- what I'm avoiding for y'all is the nightmare of
 4
     having some team of your -- of these lawyers on your --
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     who are the plaintiffs lawyers, here they are running
 6
     around the country sitting in people's living rooms while
 7
     their depositions are being taken. I mean, I'm trying to
 8
     avoid that because I think it's way ahead of where we need
 9
     to be in this litigation.
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               MR. NAPOLI: So, Your Honor, I think this goes
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     then to Mr. London's point. So the -- I disagree with
12
     Mr. Petrosinelli. We haven't figured out the appropriate
13
     time to bring this up to you. I will exchange the tolling
14
     agreement that was signed --
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               THE COURT:
                           I don't want to -- I'm not going to
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     see anything until you guys work it out. I can't make --
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               MR. NAPOLI: Well --
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               THE COURT: -- I can't make the defendants do
19
     it.
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               MR. NAPOLI: So then -- so fair enough.
21
     regard to service, so these cases have not been served.
22
     Now, this is just one group of cases. I think the
23
     triggering event needs to be service. While you may file
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     something to toll --
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               THE COURT:
                           Do you want me to order you to serve
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it by next week? I mean, I'm just trying to get the
process moving. I think y'all are creating obstacles to
progress. What we don't want are the motions to dismiss
filed. And then we're briefing all these issues before
we're ready to deal with them. I think y'all -- I think
y'all have got the sequence out of order here. I think
you -- y'all think I don't. But the difference is I'm the
judge and y'all are not. Okay? So we're going to do it
my way.
         So 98 days -- I'll enter an order, 98 days from
today for the ones who are parties. 98 days new people
coming in. If anybody's having problems, let me know.
Okay? How about that?
         MR. LONDON: Your Honor?
         THE COURT: Yes?
         MR. LONDON: I was going to answer the question
about how we came up with these biblical dates --
         THE COURT:
                     Yeah.
         MR. LONDON: -- of the 98 and 63 days. It was
the defendant's idea and I think it was a good one.
         THE COURT:
                     Yeah.
         MR. LONDON: They're all divisible by seven.
         THE COURT:
                     Okay. That's good.
         MR. LONDON: Which is when we don't run into
weekend problems.
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1 THE COURT: That sounds very biblical, by the 2 way. 3 MR. LONDON: Even more biblical. 4 MR. PETROSINELLI: We're going to rest on the 5 seventh day. 6 THE COURT: Yes. Y'all have not allowed me to 7 rest. 8 There was this issue about -- was -- you know, I 9 was trying to get the -- since we were delaying the 10 answers, I didn't want the defendants to be out there 11 hiding some defense the plaintiffs had not anticipated. I 12 have trouble imagining that could actually happen, but I 13 think it's possible. And to eliminate that possibility 14 with y'all, everybody goes off and does discovery. And 15 they don't do discovery on some issue that no one knew was 16 really an issue. 17 I -- I said I want the defendants to go ahead 18 and list their affirmative defenses. They gave you 37. 19 That's got to be a world record, okay? But you got them. 20 And that was the purpose. And then there has been this 21 suggestion that they won't -- the defendants are going to 22 have to file a fact -- a defense fact sheet for each 23 individual plaintiff as opposed to general fact sheets 24 that go to their knowledge. Why -- why do they have to 25 file it for individual -- individual -- a plaintiff -- in

response to every plaintiff case? Why? Why would that be?

MR. LONDON: Well, Your Honor, the purpose of that, again, and I -- and I -- I think I understand where -- where the Court is leaning right now, and particularly -- again, we were building the defense fact sheet structure being responsive to --

THE COURT: I -- I understand that.

MR. LONDON: -- to a plaintiff. Actually, now, it's -- the defense fact sheet is seemingly responsive to the sites at issue, which the plaintiffs will identify in a week. Plaintiffs will endeavor to supplement that list as new cases are filed and new sites are identified in the coming weeks. Defendants then, seemingly, will, within 98 days, provide new defense fact sheets.

THE COURT: Let's hold on, let me say this.

Fact -- the fact sheets have a limited utility. There's something called requests to produce, interrogatories, that are far more dynamic in my view about how you do this. They're similar but they're more dynamic.

And to the extent a specific plaintiff has a specific need for information regarding a particular defendant, all you have to do is just stick it in an interrogatory. As to defendant Mr. Smith living in Colorado Springs, please provide the following specific

information. That's what discovery is all about. That's why I'm not going to limit it to some artificial number because it may be your case-specific information that you need.

And, you know, you don't like what I'm doing here. You're going to like what I do about deposition -- about interrogatories and requests to produce. I'm trying -- all I'm trying to do is get the mechanism going where you get the information you need and we don't try to crush the defendants in the process of doing that.

MR. LONDON: And that approach, Your Honor, that -- that you just set forth, that -- that's acceptable. And that -- the paradigm is a little bit different, but we can go back and refigure this --

THE COURT: Thank you.

MR. LONDON: -- and fix it. That's acceptable.

THE COURT: Okay. Let me go through the disputes over the plaintiff fact sheets and the defense fact sheets. Let me -- let me go through this. Okay?

Okay. Who -- I'm looking now at the plaintiff fact sheets. Let me see if I can -- actually, I'm looking at the Case Management Order. Y'all are color coding these things, which were very helpful. But the copy that came to me did not -- was not color-coded. So I was having to figure out is that a plaintiff objection or a

defense objection? It was -- but my law clerk finally -- Yoni finally coughed up the color copy to me. You know, it took a while. He was hiding it in his office for some reason. But he finally -- he was testing me.

Okay. So let's just go through -- I'm at

Paragraph -- I'm trying to go through each objection here.

At Paragraph 5, there's -- okay, you know, the yellow is

for -- is for the defense and the blue is for the

plaintiffs. Tell me what the dispute here -- who wants to

tell me what's really the dispute at Paragraph 5? Where

are we having disagreement?

MR. LONDON: Your Honor, I think you've given quite a bit of guidance to this. What the PEC really wanted to be sure is that we would not be embarking in further discovery at this time. We're not -- we're not opening the door to negotiate these fact sheets in lieu of interrogatories to follow and depositions to follow. And that at such time as these cases are moved to an advance track, bellwether practice, early settlement evaluation, whatever, at that time those selected cases will go down this enhanced discovery track.

THE COURT: Yes. Now, let me say this. At some point if the -- if the defendants tell me they want to do broad discovery on the plaintiffs, even those that might not be bellwether, I'll hear them out. I'm not trying to

limit that right now. What I'm just saying is, I'm not making a decision on that. What I'm making a decision on is in the effort to manage discovery in a way that makes sense for everybody. I'm just saying individual causation ought to be something we do down the road. And that's also all the sort of medical-related issues regarding individual causation and all that.

And I'm talking about individual cases because the water districts are a different analysis. I just kind of put all of that off because I think it's largely a distraction right now. We'll get to it. And it'll be -- it -- it'll be demanding if we get to it. And -- but I'm trying to put it off.

So I think -- can y'all work out the language now understanding my view on Paragraph 5? Is that something we can work out?

MR. RING: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Good. What we're going to do is I'm going to have an order that in ten days y'all are going to give me a revised CMO. And on any issues still in dispute, I'll rule then thereafter. Okay?

And then on -- going on Page 3, end of
Paragraph 5, again, there's this language, No additional
case-specific discovery. You know, we're -- we're not
doing that. We're going to proceed with -- we're

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questions on those.

proceeding with -- I don't know if you want to say case-specific discovery. We're certainly proceeding with -- with general causation discovery. And it will be site-specific to gather that information. Do you need any more guidance as to that highlighted yellow area on Page 3? MR. LONDON: No. I think the PEC's position and, I think, consistent with what Your Honor said, this language is going to come out. If an individual -- the plaintiffs will receive defense fact sheets that are site-specific. And as Your Honor indicated a few minutes ago, if a plaintiff has -- a specific plaintiff has a question, they can serve it by interrogatory. That's the way you do it. THE COURT: MR. LONDON: Thank you. THE COURT: Okav. MS. KNAUER: Your Honor, may I speak? THE COURT: Yes, ma'am. Elizabeth Knauer. I'm the liaison MS. KNAUER: counsel for the non-manufacturing defendants. I think we would like some additional guidance on what the parameters would be -- our group, we have not been served master discovery requests because we aren't -- you know, it

really isn't relevant to us in terms of the nature of the

So we are tied to specific sites.

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And our -- our position is that if we aren't undertaking discovery of the individual plaintiffs related to those sites, then there's sort of an equity factor as well as just a practicality of us needing to engage in full-scale document collection on those sites before the more general causation issues related to AFFF are --THE COURT: Well, explain to me more specifically what you're talking about. What are you seeking that you would not -- because the parties have to produce -- the discovery they're getting, you'll get. Okay? You will get that discovery. MS. KNAUER: Right, understood. What else -- what else do you need? THE COURT: MS. KNAUER: Well, I don't -- I don't think that there has been discovery requests propounded related to specific sites other than what products were delivered to those sites. THE COURT: I would imagine they want to know any measurements of water quality at those sites. MS. KNAUER: But you can ask them this if they are part of the fact sheet. THE COURT: Right. MS. KNAUER: So all we are -- all -- all we are

fact sheet requests as the plaintiffs are providing the --

saying is that we will provide the information that the

THE COURT: Yes.

MS. KNAUER: -- sort of limited information requested in the plaintiff fact sheets. And that -- that the -- and sort of in a -- a parallel construct, that further discovery on those site-specific issues of the -- of the defendants related only to sites should be forestalled as it is for the plaintiffs and under order of the Court.

THE COURT: I'm somehow missing what you don't want to happen. What specifically are you concerned about?

MS. KNAUER: That while the general discovery is occurring on the sort of government contractor defense issues, et cetera, that we are being sort of inundated with discovery requests requiring us to engage in a large-scale document collection that isn't relevant to the issues that are really --

THE COURT: I think they're really -- I think they are relevant. That's the problem. I think they are relevant to issues -- we're trying to do -- see, you -- we can't say we're doing just governmental contractor immunity because there are fact -- there are issues that are core to the plaintiff's claims as well. It's the same factual issues. So we're not limiting to that. If -- if you -- you've got to understand, with an MDL, that the

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normal liberty of control that you have as a single party
in your case, or one of just a few parties, ends up having
to give way, at times, timing in particular to when
something happens. And that's just the nature of the MDL.
         And there are tremendous advantages to an MDL.
And, frankly, there are some disadvantages. But I haven't
heard anything specifically that you need -- what do you
need that you feel like you won't be getting right now?
         MS. KNAUER:
                      Well --
          THE COURT: Give me an example. I just don't
understand it.
          MS. KNAUER: What do we need that we won't be
getting?
         THE COURT:
                     Yes.
         MS. KNAUER: Well, I mean, I just -- I didn't --
I don't -- I guess I can give a particular example for --
for our client, the Port Authority, which is a defendant
to the City of Newburgh cases --
         THE COURT: Yes.
         MS. KNAUER: -- brought by the City of Newburgh
as the water provider. If the discovery of that
plaintiff, as the water provider, is limited to the
plaintiff fact sheets, they really have most of the
information concerning their claims in terms of --
                      Well, what additional -- what
          THE COURT:
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additional do you want?

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MS. KNAUER: Well, I -- if I -- I just feel that if they are -- if they are able to engage in full-scale discovery of us, the defendant, that we should have the equal ability --

THE COURT: Well, what do you want from them?

MS. KNAUER: Information about the actions that they have taken, their -- their damages, their costs, et cetera.

THE COURT: I intend to have -- I've said earlier, I think one of the early issues -- it's not going to be the first issue -- is going to be the water district Okay? I think that's an early issue that we -claims. that's an early set of issues we need to address. And those very issues need to be explored. And I made the point, I think, and maybe it was either the last or the prior -- one of the prior status conferences, that I thought the water district cases were in some ways like the canary in the coal mine. If the plaintiffs can't win the sort of general causation arguments there, they don't have to prove individual customers are injured. So they -- if they can't win their case -- they can't prove their case, the water districts, then basically, the -the plaintiffs are in big trouble.

On the other hand, simply because the water

districts might be able to prove their claim, doesn't mean the individual claims can win. So my -- in my head, one of the -- once we get through the -- I think there's going to be a tremendously demanding effort to figure out this government contractor immunity and the overlapping issues that go -- what people knew, and when they knew it, and how was the product developed.

The next phase is going to be the water districts. And you're just going to have to accept that in a Multidistrict Litigation, you don't get to -- you know, one party doesn't get to set the schedule for everybody else. Because otherwise we just have chaos. We can't do it all at one time.

And I understand the government contractor immunity seems like really irrelevant to you. I get that. I do. I get that completely. But you're going to have to be patient because there are going to be issues when we go to the water districts that people who aren't water districts will say, why are we spending all this time with the water districts?

You've just got -- you've just got to do it.

You've got to have some rational plan for this. You can't do it all at one time. I'm not turning you loose as a loose cannon to go after the water -- your water district.

It's just not the way we're going to order discovery.

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               MS. KNAUER: If I may, Your Honor? I -- I -- we
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     do not have an issue with being patient. I -- I think our
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     request is more that we would request that the plaintiffs
     be patient with respect to --
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               THE COURT:
                           No, I -- I've -- listen, I've ruled
 6
               We're proceeding.
                                  0kay?
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               MS. KNAUER:
                            Thank you, Your Honor.
 8
               THE COURT:
                                  Page 10.
                           Okay.
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               MR. PETROSINELLI: I think, Your Honor, you
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     decided that one.
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               THE COURT:
                           Okay.
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               MR. LONDON: This is decided. 98 days --
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               THE COURT:
                           Okay. Thank you.
14
               MR. LONDON: -- after filing or transfer.
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               THE COURT:
                           Paragraph 25 on Page 11, I think
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     that's just a fill in?
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               MR. LONDON: Yes.
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               THE COURT:
                           Okay. This vendor thing.
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     me -- I've never had anybody fighting over the vendor.
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     What's that about? I'm somehow missing that one.
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               MR. PETROSINELLI: Your Honor, I can, if you'll
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     permit me, I'll start. This is just a question for you,
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     really honestly, which is that in MDLs, at least that I've
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     been involved in, the parties use a vendor to create
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     essentially a database that can run reports for the Court
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and the parties. So for example, if in six months you wanted to say how many water district cases are there where they've done testing and had over 70 parts per trillion, you can push a button and get it.

THE COURT: And why do the plaintiffs not want to do that?

MR. LONDON: Your Honor, that's -- we -- the plaintiffs have no problem with the defendants utilizing a management system. We intend to utilize one on our end.

We just simply do not believe that the defendants -- the defendants -- the question that we've not been able to get an answer for, too, that we thought was decided is they want us to pay for this data management. We, too, are using data management to see -- and will provide reports to this Court when we finally start getting their documents -- how many are instructive, how many are duplicates, how many are redacted, how many are illegible, how many are this, how many are that. And we're going to share it with Your Honor.

And then we're going to look back and we're going to meet and confer over it. And it's helpful for the Court. We think this, too, is helpful. We just don't think, and we still don't have an answer, if we're supposed to pay for it.

This issue has -- was thought about as an

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afterthought by the defendants on the 11th hour. We, too, have used the vendors before. There are some great There are some that in our experience have been a disaster to MDLs. THE COURT: Okay. Let -- let me, let me make this easy. I don't care. Okay? Y'all can't work it out. I'm not going to impose a requirement on a vendor. Okay? Makes -- sounds like it makes some sense to use a common vendor. If y'all have one that y'all have confidence in, but that's y'all's call, not the Court's. Okay? Okay. 30 looks like the issue we've been talking about, the 98 days, and all that. Are we okay? That's covered. MR. LONDON: THE COURT: Okay. I'm now going into the questionnaires. And I'm in the -- I guess it's the personal injury questionnaire. Does that look like what that is? Yeah, personal injury fact sheet. And No. 14, let me talk to you about this direct communication thing. Fair question. I don't think it fits in the fact sheet. I think it's an interrogatory. I just think that's where it is. And if you ask 3M, Give me every communication, if you're doing the reciprocal, I mean, come on. Okay? I mean, I just think an interrogatory to that effect, followed by supplemental

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     responses, is -- the defendant is going to learn more
 2
     about these communications. I think that's the way to go.
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               So I just -- I don't know, I -- I think the
     question, these communication questions are entirely
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              They're just not -- don't need to be in the fact
     proper.
             Okay? So let's just take No. 16 out, propound it
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     as a -- defendant's can propound it as an interrogatory to
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     plaintiffs if you want to know that information.
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               MR. LONDON: Your Honor, to short circuit it,
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     that was -- that question appeared in all the
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     plaintiffs --
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               THE COURT: All --
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               MR. LONDON: -- that's the open issue in the
14
     plaintiff's actions.
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               THE COURT: Yeah.
                                  In all the -- I agree, we'll
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     just -- we'll short circuit all those.
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               And then in the defense fact sheet, it had it in
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     there. And I just -- I just sort of feel like it's more
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     appropriate as an interrogatory.
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               Okay. The defendant fact sheet. What's this
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     introductory paragraph dispute? What's that? I've never
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     had y'all -- anybody fight over the introductory
23
     paragraph.
24
               Mr. Ring?
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               MR. RING:
                          I think, Your Honor, you've -- you've
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Karen E. Martin, RMR, CRR
US District Court
District of South Carolina

1 resolved it. THE COURT: Good. Okay. 2 It's a -- it's a debate over how to 3 MR. RING: 4 define sites, essentially. 5 THE COURT: Okay. Okay. Good. Paragraph 3 is the same thing? 6 7 MR. LONDON: I think, Your Honor, it's -- it's a 8 bit -- Paragraph -- it is the same as Paragraph 3, but 9 it -- it is -- I think, Your Honor, I just want it for 10 clarification purposes because we are going to meet and 11 confer over this. I think Your Honor has adopted, in most 12 part, the definition of site as set forth -- as alleged in 13 the complaint, as identified in the complaint. 14 I think that's right. I think --THE COURT: 15 MR. LONDON: And I'm just concerned the 16 defendants here have defined site two ways, as either a 17 military institution -- excuse me, three ways, an airport, 18 a military base, or an industrial location, or -- and as 19 alleged in the complaint, I -- you know, we appreciate and 20 may disagree respectfully with Your Honor's decision. 21 THE COURT: I want the broader definition. 22 MR. LONDON: It should be alleged in the 23 complaint, not one of these three entities because there 24 There are training facilities, there are other entities. 25 are fire houses, there are fire --

THE COURT: I want any -- you know, what I don't want to do is quarreling about this. I want -- you know, I know there are firefighter training facilities, there are airports -- I want the site -- I want it to be a robust list --

MR. LONDON: Right.

THE COURT: -- and I don't want the defendants constantly having to go back if they don't have to. It won't be a complete list.

MR. LONDON: Right.

THE COURT: But I want it -- we're not trying to artificially limit this right now. I'm just trying to get past this. So whatever -- I mean, I'm guessing and I don't know this for sure, that a number of our -- when we're trying to figure out what product went to what sites, we're going to find that it went to some Department of Defense or some military branch's warehouse, right? And it stops. We don't know. We have got to then go to the Government and see, hopefully, now you're going back many years. You're -- you're trying to figure out where did -- actually that product was delivered and who has it.

It may well be in the end of all this, the parties may end up wanting to stipulate about percentages of allocation of responsibility just because it's roughly -- you know, but that's y'all's call. If you want

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to prove it, that's another way to do it. It may well be
once you get enough information by sampling, you may just
want to say why don't we just stipulate that for these
sites, you know, a certain of these various defendants
have this responsibility. It's up to y'all.
         MR. RING:
                    I think between Mr. London and I, we
can work it out --
         THE COURT: Good.
         MR. RING: -- with using the lists --
          THE COURT: Good.
         MR. RING:
                   -- an improved --
          THE COURT: And again, if we have problems,
you've got -- you've got access to me once a month, right?
You can -- and if we make a decision that's not working,
y'all need to let me know that. Okay?
          Question 14, this is, you know, to me the
central purpose of the whole fact sheet. I know the
defense objects to it. Tough. This is what we need.
                                                       Ιf
there's a better way to do it, I'm open to it.
think this is what -- this is what we need, the major
purpose of the fact sheet.
                    If I can, briefly, Your Honor?
         MR. RING:
         THE COURT:
                     Yeah.
                    Questions 7 and 10 in the defense
          MR. RING:
fact sheet actually do cover product sales.
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earlier questions also cover identifying distributors,
sales agents, and the like. 7 deals with it from the
perspective of the manufacturing defendants. 10 deals
with it from the perspective of a site owner or operator.
And I would add that there are product identification
questions in the master discovery that has been served.
And so, one of our issues was 14 seems to overlap with
ones where all --
         THE COURT: Y'all talk to each other. And if
it's duplicative -- I don't want duplication. You can
afford it, but I want it comprehensive. And if you
need -- refine one of the other ones. We don't -- let's
not have duplication. But we need to have a comprehensive
response, as much as the defendants can give it to the --
this question.
         MR. LONDON: Well, we tried, Your Honor. I --
this -- Question 7 does not apply to the manufacturing
defendants as he indicated --
         THE COURT: Yeah.
         MR. LONDON: -- so that's not applicable.
Question 10 does not get to these quest -- these issues
      And we -- we reframed this. This is the language
here.
that defendants agreed to.
          THE COURT: I -- I -- it looks --
          MR. LONDON: We think it needs to be there.
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motions, et cetera.

THE COURT: -- perfectly reasonable to me, frankly, folks. I -- I really -- I've got to tell you, as you'll -- I will confess that there will be difficulties on some of these that I just won't appreciate until somebody tells me there's a problem. But it looks reasonable to me. Let's work that out. And Questions 15 through -- through 20 are perfectly appropriate. But they ought to be interrogatories and not plaintiff fact sheets. That's just my view of it. It's just -- that's a better sort -that's a better place to put it with all these communications. Obviously, an -- a potentially important issue in the case. Okay. So it sounds like we -- you're going to let me know within ten days whether we have -- you're going to deliver to me a plaintiff fact sheet. Or, if there's any dispute, a color-coded extra copy for the Judge so Yoni can't hide it, and put Judge on that, you know, and I'll rule promptly on that. Let's talk about limiting interrogatories, requests to produce. A scheduling order -- you know, a normal case, out of the chute we send -- we serve a -answer comes in, we serve a scheduling order. You've got 90 days to do this. You've got to have post-trial

That doesn't really fit here. It just doesn't fit. That's -- you know, we're going to have 19 scheduling orders? It doesn't make any sense right now. However, if my -- if -- if we're not making progress, I'll start ordering things. Okay? I'm -- I'm kind of leaving it to y'all right now.

We've got the -- we've got the discovery requests going out. If the -- I presume from them there may be requests for 30(b)(6)'s, et cetera. Y'all got a problem, you let me know. Try to work it out among yourselves. But putting you on a time clock right now, when we don't even know what's out there, it just doesn't make a lot of sense to me.

I want you working hard. I was accused in Lipitor of putting the parties on the Bataan Death March, okay? And, you know, they weren't making enough progress initially, and I finally put the hammer down. You had to do it all by a certain day. Everybody did it. It got done. But right this moment, I'm not going to do that. And I'm not going to limit artificially the number of requests to produce or interrogatories.

If, however, there are -- there are some of those requests that seem to have marginal relevance or no relevance, and a tremendous burden on the defendants to produce it, file your motion for protective order or your

objections to it. I will address it after y'all confer, and hopefully y'all can work them out. But I think I've made it clear, I think there needs to be robust discovery in this case. And in the end, everybody won't like what I do. But there it is. They say in this business if you want a friend get a dog, right?

Okay. So I'm -- the requests to limit, I don't -- I'm not going to limit it. And the party -- the plaintiffs are free to propound the first set of discovery requests if they choose to do so.

I addressed briefly before the issue of -- I guess I did actually regarding the fact sheets. I've asked the defendants to list the defenses. They do not need to list that for every plaintiff. Now, eventually, when they answer, they will have -- of course, we'll work out how we're going to do a group answer, individual answer. But right now, they don't have to make a -- I think they've given -- they've done what I've asked them to do, which is to put you on notice of what the potential defenses are. I would have guessed y'all could have gotten all 37 if you were -- but I avoided the -- this, the problem. I told you.

Establishing a deposition protocol, what's going on with that?

MR. LONDON: Your Honor, just on the responsive

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1
     pleading issue --
 2
               THE COURT: Yeah.
 3
               MR. LONDON: -- and we understood the Court's --
 4
               THE COURT:
                           Yeah.
 5
               MR. LONDON: We're not going to reargue that
 6
     because that had --
 7
               THE COURT: Yes.
 8
               MR. LONDON: -- other implications.
 9
               THE COURT:
                           Thank you.
10
               MR. LONDON: We did receive -- and I think this
11
     is important to note -- that we received the responses
12
     from two defendants. And the report indicates that the
13
     other defendants may respond by, I think it's August 30th.
14
     We just -- we do want to -- if that's the date, great. We
15
     just want to make sure that that is --
16
               THE COURT: August 30 is the date.
               MR. LONDON: Okay. Thank you, Your Honor.
17
18
               THE COURT: And the two who have already
19
     answered -- who have already provided the information, if
20
     you'll send it digitally, the other sides can just cut and
21
             Okay? They don't really need until August 30.
     paste.
22
     Okay? If you didn't come up with one of the defenses, it
23
     would be a surprise. Okay?
24
               MR. THOMPSON: I think they get a bonus if they
25
     come up with additional --
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1 THE COURT: Yeah, anymore, right? 2 MS. KNAUER: Your Honor, may I ask for 3 clarification? 4 THE COURT: Yes. 5 MS. KNAUER: I just want to make sure that 6 submitting the statement of affirmative defenses would not 7 preclude a party from seeking to file a Rule 12 motion. 8 THE COURT: Will not. Absolutely not. 9 MS. KNAUER: Thank you, Your Honor. 10 And I anticipate at some point we THE COURT: 11 will get to that, because we're going to have immunity 12 issues that I presume will come before the Court in other 13 You see, the problem -- we have immunity issues. 14 You've got a -- they -- they often raise factual issues. 15 It's not purely legal questions. And -- and I have --16 Courts always -- I have -- parties always can -- oh, we 17 want to do discovery just on that issue. Well, it's, 18 like, terribly inefficient. You could do the whole 19 discovery on the case while you're doing discovery on the 20 one jurisdictional issue. So we always try to balance 21 that. 22 Yes, ma'am, from the Department of Justice? 23 Yes? 24 MS. FALK: Your Honor, because we're raising 25 jurisdictional issues, I -- any -- in the current

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     statement we identify two very global jurisdictional
 2
     issues.
 3
               THE COURT: I saw that. Yes, ma'am.
 4
               MS. FALK: We have other issues where you styled
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     them as affirmative defenses, we consider this just
     jurisdictional issues. Do you want the United States to
 6
 7
     list all the additional --
 8
               THE COURT: I wish you would, just so --
 9
               MS. FALK:
                          Sure.
10
               THE COURT: So to the extent there's some
11
     discovery that needs to be done on any of them --
12
               MS. FALK:
                          Sure.
13
               THE COURT: -- that the parties kind of are
14
     aware of it. Because I'd love at some point that we kind
15
     of try to address the general governmental immunity.
16
     address the governmental contractor immunity and others
17
     that -- that really go foundationally to the case. I want
18
     to -- I'd love to do those at a time, I -- I want to give
19
     everybody a chance to go do the discovery first.
20
               MS. FALK:
                          Right. We can do that by the 30th,
21
     Your Honor, that's no problem.
22
               THE COURT:
                           Good. Good.
                                         Thank you very much.
23
               Deposition protocol. I understood that that
24
     basically had been worked out or close to it?
25
               MR. THOMPSON: Your Honor, we reported to --
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yesterday that we are in discussion. We've submitted an edited version. They've come back. And they now have it under advisement. What I've advised the Court is that we will either have it worked out to submit to you as a -- an agreed-upon order or it will be ripe for you to put the hammer down. THE COURT: As y'all -- as y'all understand, I will make a decision. So when we --MR. THOMPSON: Now, there is a fascinating aspect, and that is the United States has forwarded a position which is that they believe the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure should govern the conduct of the depositions and not a negotiated protocol. So that's --THE COURT: Well, I -- I largely agree with them actually. I -- you know, I --MR. THOMPSON: I seem to remember --THE COURT: I, frankly, find the whole protocol thing -- if y'all want to do it, fine. But I largely agree with the United States on this. It works just fine. Y'all are trying to reinvent the wheel, guys. We have all these years of experience with the federal rules. works pretty well. And I'm not only available once a month to y'all. You know, we have telephones in Charleston. You call me, we'll -- I'll address an issue. MR. PETROSINELLI: Your Honor, I think the

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protocol, from our perspective, is more dealing with things like, you know, you have to go through the PEC and DCC. The issues --THE COURT: Well, you know I'm big on that. You know, when that -- that one motion came, I put it on you to -- in the future you had -- you had to sign -- put your signature on that thing to do it. I completely agree with that. Let me talk about medical monitoring issues for a second, because I think I've caused the defendants to have a heart attack over this issue. The -- I was ex -- you know, the parties have told me, quite passionately, they believe in their Okay. I'm glad you do. And I was positions. Great. going to say, okay, if everybody thinks the plaintiffs think this causes tremendous harm and the defendants think it's harmless, let's go test our theories. Let's pick a couple sites and let's go do it. It'll be voluntary. Let's go do it. Plaintiffs leapt at the opportunity and the defendants said no way. Okay. Take that for what it means. 0kay? MR. PETROSINELLI: That never happens. THE COURT: Yes. I would -- and that's fine. Never happens is fine. I am -- I thought it would be --

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US District Court
District of South Carolina

you know, I will tell you, there was a great debate.

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of y'all have read my book. There's a -- was a great debate about using the doll studies in the Brown -- in the -- in Briggs vs. Elliott, which became Brown, the Brown case, the use of the dolls. Nobody had ever done anything like that. I guess at the -- if they had answered that way, Thurgood Marshall would not have used But Marshall said he had a young assistant, the dolls. Robert Carter, later a District Judge in New York, some of y'all from New York would have known Judge Carter, he was like 30 years old. He said, you know, we've got to do this new cutting edge thing. And Marshall's, you know, a little skeptical but then believed and you have got to prove your damages if you have a case. He said, I'll tell you what, you send Clark to South Carolina. Let him do it in South Carolina. Go right to the site. Don't just have a theory. Go prove it in Summerton, South Carolina. And he did. It was a powerful piece of evidence. Now, if you go to one of -- if you go to the sites and you test them and it's a -- it's a home run for the plaintiffs, bad for the defendants. If it's a washout for the plaintiffs, bad for the plaintiffs. Right? I mean, it's not decisive either way. But it's just a piece of important evidence.

Karen E. Martin, RMR, CRR
US District Court
District of South Carolina

the tolling. I can't make you do it. I am not going to

But I can't -- it's like the whole thing with

make you. I'm not going to try to make you do it at this stage. At some point, medical monitoring, in those states which allow it -- I think it's eleven states we looked at last, I think seven of them allowed it -- might be a remedy we will consider.

I will tell you that the -- and I'm told the C8

Panel stuff is worthless on one side and its, you know,

Nobel Prize Laureate stuff on the other, okay? I'll hear

more at Science Day about all that. I'm interested in it.

I just, you know, one observation I have is that in a perfect world without statutes of limitation and the race to the courthouse, we -- this lawsuit might have been brought a couple years from now, with a little more of the data everybody wished they had. And I've told you in the midst of this we're going to get data that is going to help or hurt parties. I mean it, it just will. And the more information we have, the better.

But there are things I have the power to do and there are things I -- I don't have the power to do. And one of the things I don't have the power to do is make y'all do a medical monitoring program, to actually -- I think the defendant referred to it dismissively as an epidemiological study in the midst of litigation. If the plaintiffs are going to do that, they need to do it themselves. I can't make the defendants do it.

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But Mr. London, it might be something y'all can do, you know. And you might well do it, but you won't do it with the cooperation of the defendants. And it's entirely their prerogative not to agree to that. No need to file a memorandum any further on that. I got the defense position. I already agreed with it, frankly, before I had made those statements. City of Newburgh's amended complaint. United States has some concerns about that. What's going on with that? Y'all know anything about that? Anybody? I'm looking at blank looks here. MR. THOMPSON: Judge, this is the communication I had yesterday. The -- plaintiff's counsel from the City of Newburgh needs to amend, or desires to amend his complaint both for -- to add an additional claim and to --THE COURT: Add the United States. Don't they want -- do they want --MR. THOMPSON: No, no. As I understand -- well, he -- he is available to speak to you. THE COURT: He's standing behind you. MR. THOMPSON: And I think he probably thinks I'm not going to do as good a job discussing it as he. THE COURT: He would have good reason to think that. MR. THOMPSON: Oh. that's so unfair.

1 Come on forward and tell me what the THE COURT: 2 issue is and let me understand. 3 MR. KNAUF: Your Honor, Alan Knauf for City of 4 Newburgh. 5 THE COURT: Yes. MR. KNAUF: We did serve an amended -- or we did 6 7 file, excuse me, an amended complaint --8 THE COURT: I saw that on the 23rd, yes. 9 MR. KNAUF: -- on Tuesday which we believe was 10 right under Rule 15 because we're still working --11 THE COURT: You're probably not right about 12 that, but you're going to be able to get it done. You're 13 going -- technically, if you look at the rule -- and I 14 might be wrong about this -- but I think the rule would be 15 it's 21 days after you file or 21 days after you get a 16 responsive pleading. Okay? So you have filed now a 17 motion to amend. I would read -- I would, you filed an 18 amended complaint. I would, frankly, read it as a motion 19 to amend. Just, that's the way I would read it. If the 20 Government objects or anybody objects to it, file your 21 objection to the motion to amend. And I will rule. 22 But let me give you the short road here. 23 short road is, it's going to be amended. And I will rule 24 it as -- once it's -- I rule it as a motion to amend and 25 you object, you know, I take that as a -- the 21 days is

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     starting to run and you have a right to amend. So you're
 2
     going -- you're going to be able to amend your complaint.
 3
     We're supposed to do it. We're -- because of the delay in
 4
     filing answers, this is getting a little -- you know,
 5
     these kind of standard practices get disrupted a little
           But you're going to be able --
 6
 7
               Does anybody object to the City of Newburgh's
 8
     amended complaint?
 9
                          Your Honor, we're consulting with the
10
     Southern District of New York, who's actually been working
11
     with the plaintiffs on -- on this particular matter.
12
               THE COURT: I want you in ten days to let me
     know whether there's an objection.
13
14
               MS. FALK:
                          Sure.
15
               THE COURT:
                           And if there's not an objection, I'm
16
     going to -- I'm going to rule it as a motion to amend
17
     granted.
               0kay?
18
               MS. FALK:
                          Yeah.
19
               MR. KNAUF: Your Honor, I did have a formal
20
                                              Should I file it?
     motion drafted that I have in my file.
21
               THE COURT: Go ahead and file it. I'm going to
22
     backdate it to the day of your amended complaint.
23
               MR. KNAUF: I don't need anybody else to sign it
24
     or --
25
               THE COURT:
                                    You're welcome to do that.
                           No, no.
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     It's just your amended complaint.
 2
               Mr. Thompson, have you got any concerns?
               MR. THOMPSON: Judge, just from the -- the
 3
 4
     aspect of unexamined consequences, the CMO requires that
 5
     motions filed with the Court are to be filed by leaders --
 6
     or to be signed by leadership.
 7
               THE COURT: Okay. Here's what you're going to
 8
               Why don't you -- I think Mr. Thompson is
     do then.
 9
     actually right about this. I fussed with Mr. Petrosinelli
10
     last time about this. You need -- anybody who wants to --
11
     you know, like an amended complaint, just present it to
12
     committee. If you don't have -- if they won't agree to
13
     it, you present it to me at the next status conference if
14
     they won't file the motion for you. This is one that they
15
     would routinely -- you know, they would have no reason not
16
     to agree to.
17
               MR. KNAUF:
                           I am against a Monday -- my deadline
18
     of Monday, because of my federal tort claim.
19
                           Well, your mo -- you're fine.
               THE COURT:
20
     can file a motion to amend. You're -- you're within the
21
            Don't worry about that.
22
                           Thank you. And the other issue was
               MR. KNAUF:
23
     Ms. Williams at one of the previous conferences brought up
24
     the venue.
25
               THE COURT:
                           Venue is not an issue. I am not
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1
     trying to move venue. Venue is still in New York.
 2
     is just pretrial. I'm the pretrial judge. That's all
     that there is. Venue is -- remains in New York.
 3
 4
     Lexecon, I couldn't even try the case here if I wanted to
 5
     unless the parties consented.
               MR. KNAUF:
                           Okay. Great.
 6
 7
               THE COURT:
                           Okay.
 8
               MR. KNAUF: We -- normally in that -- I mean,
 9
     we, obviously, only filed -- we'll just come in --
10
               THE COURT:
                           Yes.
11
               MR. KNAUF: -- and add them.
12
               THE COURT:
                           Right, and we don't go back.
13
     under my rule -- my CMO-1 you don't go back to the -- to
14
     the original court to -- to do an amendment.
15
               MS. FALK: Your Honor, maybe it will short
16
     circuit this. The United States, I think, don't
17
     anticipate filing anything objecting to the amended
18
     complaint.
19
               THE COURT: The motion to amend is granted. You
20
     don't have to file anything. Okay? Done.
21
               MR. KNAUF: All right. Thank you, Your Honor.
22
               MR. EDLING: Your Honor?
23
               THE COURT:
                           Yes?
24
               MR. EDLING: Matt Edling. And I consulted with
25
     the PEC on this.
                       Just -- I suspect there is going to be a
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Karen E. Martin, RMR, CRR
US District Court
District of South Carolina

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     number of parties who will seek to amend before your
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     August 4th deadline. I might suggest, on motions to
 3
     amend, perhaps to alleviate some of the strain on Mike,
 4
     Scott, and Paul, if --
 5
               THE COURT: Don't worry about the strain on
 6
            They can handle it.
     them.
 7
               MR. EDLING: Well, the --
 8
               THE COURT: I put them on this because they can
 9
     handle this. They told me they could.
10
               MR. EDLING: They can. But the concept of them
11
     signing motions to amend seems -- as opposed to just
12
     seeking -- you know, I --
13
               THE COURT: Just submit it to them.
                                                    They can
14
     file one line, we consent to all of these.
15
               MR. EDLING: Good.
                                   Thank you.
16
               THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.
17
               MR. LONDON: And I think Your Honor addressed
18
     that.
            Thank you.
19
               THE COURT: Yes. But it makes the point that
20
     we're trying to have some control, support of our
21
     leadership. That's really the key here because otherwise
22
     we have, in my view, chaos.
23
               Let me talk a moment. I -- I'm sure everyone
24
     noticed that I filed a Science Day Order. Did everybody
25
                Surprise. And y'all notice that I -- the one
     see that?
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thing about it is I didn't do anything that any of y'all wanted me to do. I did it exactly the way -- I think y'all had made -- y'all were -- y'all were going to spoonfeed me. And I was going to sit there. What was it Judge Sirica said, I was going to sit there like a -- like a fool watching the parade go by or something like that? Or was it nincom -- I was going to be like a nincompoop watching the parade go by? I think I asked the -- under Paragraph 7, all the questions, everybody's terrified what the answer is, Because nobody really knows the answer to these, is my guess. Or at least they won't admit to themselves that they don't really know the answer. But these are the central questions in my view of the case. And I've been doing a lot of reading, and I don't know the answers to these questions. So I'm really interested in -- I mean, there are all these different, dramatically different, numbers for what is toxic to human health? What's risk to human health? What's the underlying basis for these -- for this, for these tremendously varied numbers? And to that end, the plaintiffs put in a -- in a

And to that end, the plaintiffs put in a -- in a filing with me, I can't remember what document. It was recent. That -- it was the thing about medical monitoring. It made the statement that the C8 Medical

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Panel had used 50 parts per trillion. Where'd that come
       Because when I read the studies I've read from the
medical panel, I haven't found specific numbers.
I'm not looking hard enough. Maybe I don't understand
what they're saying.
          They talk about certain cause -- certain
conditions, like certain cancers, were at the highest
        But they don't define what the highest level of
exposure is. I don't -- I haven't been able to find that.
And it may be that I'm just having a -- I'm not looking
hard enough or I'm looking fully. So where did this
50 parts per trillion come from? Yes?
         MR. LONDON: Your Honor, it was part of the
class definition. And at the time, back in '04, '05, that
was the lowest detection number.
          THE COURT: The lowest detection number in the
data they were --
          MR. LONDON: That was -- at that time, correct.
         THE COURT:
                      Did they later get more spe --
more --
         MR. LONDON: Oh, no, that was how the class was
         50 parts per trillion for a year of expo -- one
defined.
year of drinking the water.
          THE COURT: Yeah, but see, but the studies
indicated that from the -- I understand, I know how you
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basis?

defined the class. What -- what was unclear to me was when the medical panel was saying testicular cancer is present with the highest rate of exposure; what was that rate of exposure? I just don't know. And I'm trying to figure out, and you have all these different groups recently using 10 to 14 parts per trillion. What is the data there? The EPA uses 70 parts per trillion. Department of Defense is relying on that in a lot of their work. What is the basis for that? Does the CDC Panel, didn't they have some low number as well? What was -what was that all about? There's a New Jersey Water Quality Authority that had some numbers. I just think we -- this is going to end up being kind of important. I think about what -- and I will say, it may be particularly important on the water district cases because think about this for a moment. If the water districts say the defendants contaminated our product. We have this product called water. And we sell our water. And it contaminated our product. And you'll say, well, you have 25 parts per trillion. Is that's not -- is that contamination or not contamination? It might well go on what the science shows. Is there a reasonable basis for

I think this is, like, a really important

that concern? Because -- is there a reasonable scientific

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question to sort out. And, you know, I'm going to be --I'm going to be interested in hearing out the -- your ex -- your respective experts on that issue about, you know, is there a scientific basis for these various numbers. And we've talked before about how small so many parts per trillion really is. I mean, we're talking about, you know, drops of -- of the -- of the product in a large body of water. So I -- I think it's -- it's just -- I think that is a very important issue which I'll be asking -- I have a lot of interest in, and which I think is very important to the claims of the plaintiff and the defenses. Mr. Summy, you have something to add about that? MR. SUMMY: Yes, Your Honor. I just want to comment that, you know, the questions you're asking I think are right on point. They're especially important for water providers. And, you know, we believe that the experts, certainly on the plaintiffs' side, are going to be prepared to address those and have a strong basis to, you know, describe for the Court what these states are doing and what the basis for these numbers are. And so we look forward to that opportunity. THE COURT: Good. MR. OLSEN: Your Honor? THE COURT: Yes?

MR. OLSEN: Just one question from the defense perspective. We talked to the PEC last night and they're contemplating it, but in looking -- and thank you, I agree with Mr. Summy that -- that we agree these are important questions and we'll be prepared to address them. If you look at the questions that Your Honor outlined, the first five categories, you have environmental remediation questions. And at the top cycle, human effect questions. And that, at least from the defense perspective, falls into two readily-definable buckets. And we have two experts can -- that can address it.

That last category, talking about alternative products, that's at least from our perspective really a separate question. And we're not looking to expand the time limit at all. Two hours is perfectly fine. But from the defense perspective, we were thinking that three experts would be very helpful for us to address those kind of three buckets where we would have a separate expert to address that AFFF question in the same time limit.

THE COURT: Mr. London, what's the plaintiff's view? Or Mr. Summy?

MR. LONDON: Mr. Summy is going to address this.

MR. SUMMY: Your Honor, the first I heard about this was last night at the cocktail party where they were talking about this. Our current plan is to have two

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     experts address this. But, you know, we have --
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               THE COURT:
                           How about up to three? Up to three.
 3
     Y'all -- if y'all want three, and you hit the same time
     limit, I don't care.
 4
 5
               MR. SUMMY:
                           Okay.
 6
               THE COURT: I want -- do want people to know
 7
     what they're talking about. Okay? I mean --
 8
               MR. SUMMY:
                           Sure.
 9
               THE COURT: -- you know. And, you know, I've
10
     said we're going to begin the process by them telling me
11
     which is in their expertise.
12
               I once had this case where we had two lawyers --
13
     sorry, guys -- from the Department of Justice, from
14
     different divisions of the Department of Justice. And it
15
     was -- it covered -- it was another environmental case
16
     involving a cruise ship. And one was from Natural
17
     Resources and one from some other area. And I would ask
18
     one of them a question, and they said, well, that's hers.
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     And then they said, No, no, that's yours. And there
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     was -- nobody would own it, you know? And I was saying,
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     Come on, guys, one of y'all, just one person needs to
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     answer my question.
23
               So I do want to know who's going to answer those
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     questions. And I recognize there are areas which may be
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     outside the expertise, because I do go in different -- in
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different areas. But, you know, I think this Science Day might not only be helpful for me -- you know, that's what it's really intended for, selfishly, for me. I think it ought to help all of y'all to think more deeply about the underlying science on -- on your respective positions.

Okay. Now, that is the list I had. Are there additional issues that the parties need to address with me?

MR. THOMPSON: No, Your Honor. Thank you very much.

MR. PETROSINELLI: I have one, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Yes sir.

MR. PETROSINELLI: Just an update for you. You might have seen this on the agenda. The State of New York had filed a second complaint in the Northern District of New York. And they tried to get that court to decide on the motion to remand. I appeared in a hearing, I think it was Tuesday, before the magistrate judge up there where we argued that any motion to remand should be brought before Your Honor.

THE COURT: Correct.

MR. PETROSINELLI: And I'm happy to report that the magistrate judge granted our motion to stay that case, which -- and when he did that, the State of New York then withdrew their opposition to transfer the case to Your

Honor. So I don't know what that was all about, but all I can say is I'm happy to say that that case is on its way.

THE COURT: Let -- let me just say, I understand how some of the parties may feel like their issues aren't being addressed like step one, theirs's may be step two or three. I get that. I really do. And I'm going to -- I'm going to try to stay very conscious of the interests of all the parties not to unduly address -- not to address one set of claims and completely ignore the interests of others. But there are limitations when you have 110 really complicated cases.

And folks, tell me, do we have a lot more coming? What are we hearing?

MR. LONDON: Yes.

MR. PETROSINELLI: I should say that the State of New York just filed, I think yesterday, a third case in that same court. I'm hoping, given what's happened, that they won't oppose transfer and try to end run -- end run a motion to remand, but I guess we'll see.

THE COURT: Folks, let me ask you what may just be a completely ridiculous idea, but one in which I think the parties would have a common interest in this. I have attempted on my own to gather as much information as I can. I've been reading the various Department of Defense reports to congress on publicly-released reports. And I

have read the interests of numerous congressmen of all parties, all parts of the country who have understandable concern about the effects of this product may have in their individual congressional districts and in and around military installations.

I made a reference before that to the extent that the plaintiff's claim have merit -- claims have merit, that this could be an existential threat to the -- to the defendants. The -- I don't think the -- the liability could be extraordinary.

The Government has filed motions to a certain governmental immunity. I don't think anybody would argue that to the extent there is culpability or responsibility here, which is yet to be determined, the Government was an active participant in that. There is no question about that.

And I'm not saying anything intentional. I just think in terms of who allege -- you know, who was involved in the exposure of the product to servicemen and to people living in and around military installations and so forth or near these products where the -- where the product was exposed.

That seems to strike me that there needs to be some careful consideration of whether in -- in a reso -- potential resolution of this case the United States should

not participate. It may be -- have to be a voluntary congressional act, a version of -- sort of the 9/11 situation, where the United States may participate in a settlement fund. I -- and I would suggest as -- and you've got many, many things on your plate -- that y'all might in common seek to start a dialogue with congress on that issue.

I know there are a lot of congress members of the House and Senate vitally interested in this subject. I see it on the internet. They're very concerned. And it -- it would have to be a decision by congress to do that.

To the extent there's governmental immunity, that would -- that would be the responsibility. But it has been known, of course, there are instances where the Government by -- you know, we traditionally call those private bills where the Government steps in and contributes.

So I simply say to you -- to all of you that that might be a source of something of common interest that y'all ought to be exploring. It would not be a fast process. But, you know, all across the country, news reports -- I suspect the plaintiffs lawyers may have some role in this -- are starting to pop up about the dangers of this contamination. And that is, obviously, generating

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a great deal of public concern and perhaps response by
people who are in elected positions who may be in a
position to play some role in what may be necessary to
remediate.
          I -- you know, the Government has spent, I don't
know, Ms. Williams, hundreds of millions of dollars now on
remediation?
              Is that fair?
          MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, Your Honor.
          THE COURT: So, obviously, this is a -- this is
a big task. It may be bigger than anybody sitting in this
courtroom can han -- do themselves.
          Anything further to come before the Court?
          Yes, sir?
          MR. DESAI: Yes, could I just respond very
briefly as to --
                      Come on forward.
          THE COURT:
          MR. DESAI:
                      Thank you, Your Honor.
          THE COURT:
                      Yes.
          MR. DESAI:
                      Mihir Desai from the State of New
York.
          THE COURT: Yes. You're the one filing all the
lawsuits. You're starting to act -- you need to come sit
with the plaintiffs here. You're going to be like -- you
know, you're starting to act like a good plaintiff's
lawyer.
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MR. DESAI: It is correct we had a case pending in the Northern District of New York. We just -- we think that case still belongs in the state court of New York because there's not a basis for federal court jurisdiction. There are no federal contracts at issue with the sites that are -- regarding -- in that complaint. But the judge there in the status conference that was referred to earlier this week said that there was not time adequately to address a rule on a remand motion by the time the JPML ruled on the transfer motion, so therefore we did withdraw.

THE COURT: Yeah. Let me tell -- let me say this. In my Lipitor case, I remanded a lot of cases.

MR. DESAI: Okay.

THE COURT: I mean, we -- we -- I had a magistrate judge who did nothing but handle remand cases, and we had some where they didn't have complete diversity and so forth. And we, you know, we remanded it. The question is can you have some kind of central decision making in all of this so you don't ask random judges all across the country to address the very -- the identical issue? So we may have other remand motions. I'm not promoting remand. I think the MDL makes a lot of sense to kind of getting central control and having -- keeping as many people here as appropriate to be here. And, you

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know, I'm a believer in the system. But there are
instances where this Court doesn't have jurisdiction.
And, you know, if so -- and if that's the case, so be it.
         MR. DESAI: There are sites in New York where we
may expand our complaint, file new suits. And some of
that may involve military sites. And Your Honor has
already ruled on a remand motion with respect to that.
          THE COURT:
                      I have.
          MR. DESAI: And then we certainly wouldn't
oppose that in the future. But there are different types
of sites.
          THE COURT: Well, to the extent you have a --
you come here and you have a remand motion after the panel
transfers it to me, make your motion. And, you know,
under the leadership, you should at least -- you know, you
need to consult with --
         MR. DESAI: Sure.
          THE COURT: -- with the PEC. And if they don't
approve, they aren't willing to sign on, you would come
before me for permission to file it. And then I will -- I
will address whether, you know, whether -- I will tell you
that I would -- I will likely address a remand motion. I
mean, I'm -- even if the PEC doesn't agree to it, I
would -- I'm going, I'm going to hear out remand motions.
So -- and I'll address them on the merits.
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               MR. DESAI: Thank you, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.
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               Anything further?
               MR. THOMPSON: Judge --
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               THE COURT: Hearing's adjourned.
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 6
               MR. THOMPSON: -- thank you.
          (WHEREUPON, court was adjourned at 10:33 a.m.)
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     I certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript from
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10
     the record of proceedings in the above-entitled matter.
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         s/Karen E. Martin
                                                 8/4/2019
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     Karen E. Martin, RMR, CRR
                                         Date
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